Dies Mercurius, Id. Mai.
anno ab Incarnatione Xti
MCMLXXIV

now Sunday May 18th I think,

Dearest René

Many thanks for your letter, in fact your two letters. Yes, the news of dear Bernard's death was & is a shock indeed — for especially of late years we have talked or written a lot to each other especially when I was in my dugout at Monksdene and had a 'phone by ~~me~~ my elbow — he had that bad stomach ~~ulcer~~ ulcer, but I understood that was getting very much better and he had been driven over here to see me twice lately once with Kathleen Raine & then again when you were here — yes, he didn't look very well I admit, but seemed to me in fairly good spirits — better than he had seemed on his previous visit.

Anyway, a few days later a nurse or sister came & said someone had 'phoned & asked if she could speak to ~~them~~ me personally, so I went to the phone and it was Bernadine who said 'we felt we should tell you that daddy died on Thursday as you were so close a friend of Bernard. Well, I could only express my great sorrow & ask how Barbara was bearing up & send her my love & sympathy — how flat & inadequate any words are on such occasions — I said, well, God rest him and lux perpetua luceat ei which latter seemed, to me, to

Have recieved an unexpected fat book 464 pages from the University de Toulouse-le Mirail entitled *Les Poètes-Combattants Anglais De la Grande Guerre*, containing a Chapter VII (pages 290 to 339) called *La Geste de David Jones* Sent me by the editor Roland Bouyssou. The Chapter concerning me is an analysis of *In Parenthesis* but refers also to *The Ana* & *Epoch & Artist* etc. I wish Bonnerot had lived to see it, for she worked so hard to get my stuff at least known of in French university circles.

②

have a ~~particular~~ particular rightness in the case of dear Bernard.
I fear it will be a very great ~~[illegible]~~ grief to Harman.
I find it so difficult to really believe it, when some
especial friend has died.

I'm glad my last letter to you with all that stuff
about the Edwardian conquest of Wales did not wholly
bore you, but it's a matter about which I so
constantly think about & the more one gets hold of
~~the~~ such details as are available the more
the whole business takes on a tradegy, in the
Greek sense.

Yes I wholly agree about those unfortunate
'illustrations' to the Táin — the artist's
brief note on them ~~doubt illuminate his~~ does not
illuminate his intentions either. But he says, ~~[illegible]~~ rightly,
that the conditions prevailing in an Early Celtic
society making possible ~~not~~ a graphic comment on
the text but rather an extention of it (words to
that effect) are not possible to-day – but
his illustrations might be seen "as shadows
thrown by the text that they derive their
substance" It is awfully difficult to see
in these ~~brush~~ black brush marks anything that
evokes the text – whether one tries to see them
as 'purely abstract' forms or more or less
'figurative' – odd, & I loath criticizing
a bloke's works especially when the
~~touch~~ undertaking is so terribly difficult.
but these illustrations of vast numbers of
chaps, or even (at least I suppose that is intended)
evoke more a large assembly at a
football match or something of that sort.
rather than massed armies of the warriors of Ireland
& it's terribly difficult, however much one
tries to rid oneself of unfair judgment,
to see what the illustration opposite page 148
or ~~page~~ that opposite page 114, reflects
even as a shadow the matter of the
text. what, in a very general sort of way,
they did vaguely recall was
certain rock paintings found in Africa &
~~[illegible]~~

Bill Blissett also came on the Monday after the Sunday
of the Mermaid Theatre & was greatly pleased & said
what I remember you speaking of that the number of people was
just about right in that it made it more intimate and informal.

also among some peoples of North America – ~~Indians~~ 'Red Indians' as we used to call them, but only in certain respects – flicks of paint or what not – but of course much, much better.

I thought you would like to know that various chaps who managed to get to that Mermaid Theatre thing thought it went awfully well – including Mick Rickey & Stanley Hayman & his wife, Jacqueline & they all thought you were splendid in disgusing the stuff with Douglas C. & I had a letter fr Kathleen Raine who was there & she said the Barnard Wall was so moved that he wept... He actually 'phoned up here on the Monday morning following the Show & asked them to take a message to me saying how well it had come off. That was the last message I had fr him for a few days later he was taken ill & died in hospital of pneumonia.

I wonder if I could ask you to ask Joan if she could remember the words of that English Folk Song that I like best of all, called The Six Dukes. Eric used to sing it superbly & I knew it by heart till some years back. But now only in pieces.

I dont often listen to the blasted wireless but a bit back I heard a chap on the Desert Island Disks programme which is usually either just awful or at best a bit of Bach or other of the 'Great Masters'. Well, when I was not well in bed a bit back, I turned the bloody thing on & to my astonishment heard with incredulity the heavenly voice of dear Joyce reading that wonderful bit fr the end of Anna Livia though the brutes had cut it a bit. Then another favourite thing of mine a Folk Song (Irish) but cant recall what it was. & then, would you believe it, The Six Dukes – all chosen by this same bloke. But even that

They cut a bit and the bit I like most.
The bit about Six dukes went before him /
Six raised him from the ground / Six dukes followed after
him in their ~~black~~ mourning gowns. Black was their
mourning & white was their wand / And so yellar
was the flamboys what they carried in their hand.

I do love the
yellow light of
the flambeaux
& so white was
their wand.

Otherwise it was as I remember it
"Six dukes went a-fishy
down by the sea side

When they spied a dead body,
~~What the [illegible] tide has washed away~~
(or) ~~Washed up by the [illegible] tide~~ ?

One of them said to each other
these words I heard 'em say
'Tis the Royal Duke of Grantham
What the tide has washed away ?
~~Washed up by the tide~~ (?)

They took him down to Portsmouth (?)
to the place where he was known
They took him ~~[illegible]~~ up to London
to the place where he was born
or vice versa

They took out his bowells
They stretched out his feet

And they balmed his body
with roses so sweet
the missing lines as above which were cut.
(or betwix)
He now lies between two towers
He now lies in cold clay
and the Royal Queen of Grantham
goes weep-ing away.

I believe it was of the period of Charles II.

Perhaps dear Joan could sort out this
middle & check the lines the brutes left out.
Much love to you both & do hope
at least she wont have to hear an R.S.M. Jones being a man subject to authority
and saying three times 'Put that stick down'. 'No, sir'. 'Put that bloody stick down'
'No, sir'. 'Put that stick down.' 'No, sir' 'Very well,
fall out yous two men, fix bay'nets – At the slope if you dont mind an' escort this man
to the Guard room. Tell the Sergeant of the Guard, to put him under close arrest.

I've never discovered why, but so often 'yous two' in place of 'you two' was employed, especially by Scots N.C.O's, but this Beauty was a Londoner not a Scot

Joan sprained ankle is getting better

Love
Dai.

18/5/74

Bernard

—

Bouysson

—

Kinsella's Táin